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Listening and responding to the collective voice of the American people is what government is supposed to be all about. For too long, Americans have watched majorities in Congress promise accountable, transparent and responsible government, without ever making good on that promise. That's all changing.

Two new online forums launched by House Republicans earlier this year, YouCut and America Speaking Out, are putting San Diegans and Americans everywhere at the forefront of the national debate. Each forum gives families and taxpayers an opportunity to influence the way government operates and how it chooses to spend money.

Wherever people look, the signs of a downturn economy are apparent. Unemployment in San Diego continues to mirror the national rate of almost ten percent while small businesses, the growth engine of the American economy, face an uncertain future under a bureaucratic tilt that favors government regulation and expansion.

Most small businesses, whether because of new health care law or the possibility of tax increases on energy or production, are cutting budgets while preparing to assume greater costs. Even worse, businesses simply aren't hiring. Until they do, the national economy will likely stay where it is, and fail to achieve the level of recovery that is needed to put us back on track.

What's clear is that the current approach, whereby excessive sums of tax dollars are infused in the economy, is not working. If it were, we'd see real growth right now, or at least signs that economic recovery is forthcoming. We don't.

What we see instead is government promising that the economy will get better, but only through a recovery plan that hinges on deficit spending and expanding government influence. In actuality, that approach is only driving us deeper in debt and threatening our future.

Of course, spending was out of control well before President Obama even took office and Democrats won majorities in Congress, but that's absolutely no excuse to advance the status quo. In just the last few years, when faced with opportunities to reduce spending and recommit to fiscal responsibility, the Democratic leadership decided to spend even more, pushing our national debt above \$13 trillion and putting America on course to surpass \$19 trillion in debt obligations by 2015.

Everywhere I go, people tell me that the spending needs to stop, and that debt reduction and job growth needs to be our foremost priority. I agree. And while I continue voting against measures in Congress that are deemed fiscally irresponsible, instead supporting alternative measures that do not add to the deficit, it's important that I and my colleagues continue hearing from you about the challenges we face together.

That's exactly why House Republicans created YouCut and America Speaking Out. To give families an opportunity to shape the national agenda, restore faith in government, and promote common sense reforms that put Americans first.

The premise of YouCut is straightforward. Each week, America votes for one of five wasteful spending programs and Republicans force a vote on the selection that receives the most votes. So far, over one million votes have been cast, asking House Republicans to push for a vote on proposals to sell excess federal property, reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and eliminate plenty of other unneeded or duplicative programs across the full spectrum of government.

Likewise, America Speaking Out gives Americans a voice, by offering a venue for thoughts and ideas about how best to reform government. I've posted suggestions myself, and encourage every San Diegan to at least visit the site and consider either posting a proposal or offering feedback on someone else's suggestion.

Accessing these forums is easy. Simply go to my website at [www.hunter.house.gov](http://www.hunter.house.gov), and click on the icons for America Speaking Out and YouCut. Both are user-friendly, having hosted Americans from all over the country who say enough is enough.

House Republicans are committed to giving Americans a platform to change the way government does business once and for all. No more talk, it's time for action.